



Tennessee Regulatory Authority

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TRA Approves Number Conservation plan

The plan would require the state's telecommunications industry to enact measures that may extend the life of telephone numbers in the (615) and (901) areas.

Nashville – The Tennessee Regulatory Authority (TRA) voted unanimously to approve a plan aimed at extending the life of the state's telephone numbering resources.

The decision comes just two months after the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) approved a TRA request for additional authority to address Tennessee's numbering utilization concerns.

"This decision is noteworthy in that it allows us to implement a specific plan to address the state's area code problem, independent of federal constraints," says Eddie Roberson, TRA Chief of Consumer Services.

The plan specifically allows the TRA to proceed with 1,000 Block Number Pooling, a method of conserving numbers, and directs the state's telecommunications industry to implement the plan in the (615) and (901) areas.

Under the present system, telephone numbers are assigned to telecommunications service providers in blocks of 10,000. If a carrier only uses a portion of the assigned block of numbers, a surplus of numbers remain that no other carrier can use. Under the TRA plan, blocks of 1,000 would be issued instead of 10,000.

Upon implementation of number pooling, the decision also calls for the reclamation of any underused blocks of telephone numbers. Reclamation would ensure that any stranded numbers would be returned for reassignment to other telecommunications providers. This would allow the provision of numbers to continue without depleting the supply of numbers.

Adds Roberson, "The net impact of reclaiming any underused numbers is the possibility that they could be used by other carriers if necessary, which I think is an efficient way of administering the state's number resources."

Two factors contribute to the consumption of telephone numbers: The first is the demand for telecommunications services, and the second is the way in which numbers are allocated to telecommunications service providers.

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Implementation of number pooling will begin in 2001, with the (615) area taking effect in March, and the (901) area taking effect sometime before September.

For more information about area codes, visit our web site at www.state.tn.us/tra.

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